

Notice of Completion of Inventory of Native American Human Remains and Associated Funerary Objects from Washington County, Rhode Island, in the Possession of the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology.

AGENCY: National Park Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice.

Notice is hereby given in accordance with provisions of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, 25 U.S.C. 3003(d), of the completion of an inventory of human remains and associated funerary objects in the possession of the Peabody Museum from one site in Washington County, Rhode Island. Representatives of culturally affiliated Indian tribes are advised that these human remains and associated funerary objects will be retained by the Peabody Museum until June 7, 1993 after which they may be repatriated to lineal descendant or the culturally affiliated group.

The detailed inventory and assessment of human remains and associated funerary objects from this one Washington County site has been made by the Collections Managers and Curatorial Associates at the Peabody Museum in consultation with representatives of the Narragansett Tribe of Rhode Island.

The collection was retrieved from two graves on the Ninigret Burial Hill, also called the Indian Burial Hill in Charlestown, Rhode Island. Between 1857 and 1861 persons unknown dug up the northernmost grave, and around 1863 Usher Parsons, M.D., dug into the adjacent grave. Some human remains and associated funerary objects resulting from these activities eventually found their way into the collections of Brown University, and from there in 1923 to the Peabody Museum, Harvard, when Brown decessed its collections.

From the first grave came an adult female human cranium (PM 236-10/60374/471), a silver chain in two pieces, 2 fragments of brass soles and one leather sole, fragments of kettle bales, the remnant of a knife, 2 circle pins, one oval shaped metal ring, a fragment of glass, a hollow glass stem containing liquid, a silver or pewter vessel with handles and a link chain, and a corroded brass container (PM 23-6-10/94193-94200). From the second grave came an adult male human femur (PM 23-6- 10/60375). There are no associated funerary objects with the femur.

The artefacts at the Peabody and other artefacts reported by Usher Parsons give a date for the northernmost burial as around 1660. This evidence when taken in conjunction with the name of the burial plot, historical and other local information reported by Usher and others is strong evidence that the individuals represented are Ninigret I, Sachem of the Iliantics, and an unmarried daughter.

In the years since the burials were made, the Niantics have merged with the Narragansett. There are believed to be descendants of Ninigret resident in the area today.

This notice has been sent to officials of the Narragansett tribe. Representatives of any other Indian group which believes itself to be descended from the individuals described above should get in touch with David Pilbeam, Peabody Museum, 11 Divinity Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02138, telephone: (617) 495-2248

Dated: April 21, 1993

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